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Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

May 17, 2005

LB 312

SENATOR LANDIS: This doesn't change LB 312. This changes the underlying LB 608. This is the work that Curt and I did a couple of years ago on getting a rural development tier, by the way, the very first rural development bill that's actually got people out doing this work and getting some money, with exception of the microenterprise projects that have been around the state that we have on the books. By making this adjustment, we get a whole lot more locations that get access to LB 608. The problem with this is, if you start changing the line on what's rural, less and less is rural, less and less gets aimed at it, more and more first-class cities become available, and when that happens people who want to expand and go out will choose between rural areas and what you and I might well call urban areas. The net result when you get done with all this is it's practically, expect for the larger first-class cities, everybody gets to use LB 608. And the problem with that is that the rural areas that you and I know of and think of as being rural, small-town Nebraska, will compete side by side for these tax benefits for their businesses as larger, much better well-connected cities. And I think it dries up rural opportunity and puts it into the upper mix, upper tier of first-class cities in the state who already have a bunch of other access to a lot of other programs and don't need it. I...it's not that I'm indifferent. I've been voting "not voting" up until now. I'm voting red on this amendment and the reason is it makes rural development less successful by adding larger and larger entities into those people who can use the rural development tier. And when that happens, the big will dominate the small and we'll have less rural growth; that...not less rural growth by the new definition, but it will be in larger and larger cities, not smaller and smaller cities. And for that reason, I oppose AM1610. Senator Smith wants to make this program work. I want to make this program work. But, in fact, you know what? We've got a track record that's developing and, for the first time, we've got a rural development bill that's turning out people who are hiring and expanding in rural Nebraska. We have about \$800,000 of benefits in this year, and we're not done.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Landis. Stand at ease for